

BETTER INFORMATION, BETTER COMMUNICATION, BETTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Challenge

Like most county governments, Allen County wants to provide taxpayers the best services possible, especially when it comes to public safety. One of the best ways to improve emergency response services is to improve communications - give responders better information faster.



Action

GIS has been integrated into the emergency communications center shared by the City of Fort Wayne and Allen County. The 911 dispatchers on duty can see property lines, aerial photography, streets and addresses. When a call comes in, dispatchers can see the location and relay important information directly to the people who need it most - the responders.

Emergency personnel know what to expect when they arrive at a scene - how big a yard is, if there are outbuildings, alleys, or nearby schools. Dispatchers can also supply information from the GIS while responders are in transit. During a pursuit, police can herd the offender's car into a cul-de-sac, ending a potentially dangerous situation even if they are not familiar with the area.

The GIS also works with the Federal E911 mandate that requires cell phones be locatable. In one instance, a woman called 911, said she was going to commit suicide, but hung up before dispatchers could get any other information. Using the GPS technology in her cell phone, dispatchers were able to pull up the woman's precise location and EMTs arrived within minutes.



Dispatchers, using a free GIS viewer, are able to see potential hazards in a neighborhood and relay that information to police, fire and medical personnel.

Results

- Safer Responders - forewarned is forearmed, especially in dangerous or unpredictable situations
- Safer Public - when emergency personnel can do their jobs better and more efficiently, lives are saved